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THE HISTORY OF  
Torch

*Torrey*























*Dr. JESSE TORREY, jr.*

*The advancement of knowledge his arm, made ready to do*

# The Intellectual Torch

Developing a Plan for the Universal Dissemination of  
Knowledge and Virtue by Means of  
Free Public Libraries

By  
Jesse Torrey, Jun.

*The Librarian's Series*

*Edited by*  
*John Cotton Dana and Henry W. Kent*  
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## INTRODUCTION

One late forenoon in the winter of 1815, the 4th of December to be exact, a young man walked through the streets of Washington toward the place where Congress was about to assemble. Comely in appearance, still in his twenties, and brisk in his walk, his usually observant manner seemed a bit dulled by preoccupation. Perhaps his thoughts were of the Congressional session he was about to witness, a privilege which he had long coveted and anticipated. Possibly they were of the recent war with England, plain evidence of which lay ahead on his path down Pennsylvania Avenue, in the Capitol, burnt and ruined by the British the preceding year. Such is the egotism of young manhood, however, even amidst attractive and interesting surroundings, it is far more likely that he was considering again his favorite project, his "new idea," to which he fondly desired to call the attention of Congressmen and Legislators. Partly conceived fifteen years before and shortly afterward worked out in actual practice, temporarily laid aside while he secured his professional education, a few months previous he had resolved to devote himself to it anew. He had even called upon President Madison and secured his approbation of his plan. Now, in Washington, he had been devoting himself to writing for the newspapers, and he may have been this morning planning the little volume, almost ready for the printer, of these newspaper contributions which he intended to issue under the imposing pseudonym, "Discipulus Libertatis atque Humanitatis."

At any rate his thoughts were pleasant, but suddenly diverted. He writes thus in a later work, "The Portraiture of Domestic Slavery". "My agreeable reverie was suddenly interrupted by

the voice of a stammering boy who exclaimed 'There goes the Ge-Ge-orgy-men with a drove o' niggers chain'd together two and two.' 'What's that?' said I, 'I must see,' and, going to the door, I just had a distant glimpse of a light covered waggon followed by a procession of men, women and children resembling that of a funeral."

The immaturity of the man, despite his impressive projects for the betterment of his fellow-citizens, is well illustrated in the next sentences. "I followed them hastily; and as I approached so near as to discover that they were bound together in pairs, some with ropes, and some with iron chains, (which I had hitherto seen used only for restraining beasts), the involuntary successive heavings of my bosom became irrepressible. This was, with me, an affection perfectly peculiar to itself, which never having before experienced, gave me some surprise. I have since heard an intelligent gentleman, from Scotland, describe a similar symptom. He affirmed, that on his arrival upon the coast of the United States (in Chesapeake Bay,) his first view of the slaves *brought his heart into his throat*. Overtaking the *caravan*, just opposite to the old capitol, I inquired of one of the *drivers* (of whom there were two) 'What part of the country they were taking all these people to?' 'To Georgia' he replied. 'Have you not' said I, 'enough such people in that country yet?' 'Not quite enough' he said. I found myself incapable of saying more, and was compelled to avert my eyes immediately from the heart-rending scene!

"With these mournful spectra, flitting in succession before me, and the black procession still in view, the pleasant anticipations which I had been indulging but fifteen minutes previous, became totally reversed. Returning pensive toward my lodgings, and passing by the capitol, I thought,—'Alas poor Africa,—*thy cup is the essence of bitterness!* This *solitary* magnificent temple, *dedicated to liberty*, opens its portals to *all* other nations but *thee*, and bids their sons drink *freely* of the cup of *freedom* and

happiness;—but when *thy* unoffending, enslaved sons, clank their blood-smeared *chains* under its towers, it sneers at their calamity, and mocks their lamentations with the echo of contempt! To return from this lengthy excursion, I must acknowledge (however ludicrous it may seem to those who are *hardened* to such things by repetition,) that the tragedy of a company of men, women and children, pinioned and bound together with chains and ropes, without accusation of crime, and driven as beasts of the harness, through the metropolis of that country, of which I had hitherto indulged both pleasure and pride, in the consciousness of being a *native citizen*, and, of having commenced my life coevally with its constitutional organization; occurring at the precise hour of the convocation of the guardians of its liberties; produced a new era in my sensations. Disinclination, as well as the delay incurred, prevented my visit to the congressional hall on that day.—And I devoted several succeeding days to the purpose of delineating on paper, a faithful copy of the impressions and sentiments which involuntarily pervaded my *full* heart and agitated mind."

In this sudden diversion of his thoughts and its results is well portrayed *Jesse Torrey*.

For this young man, the writer of the description epitomized and quoted here, was Jesse Torrey, author of the pamphlet herein reprinted, anti-slavery agitator, advocate of popular education, total abstinence pioneer, projector of free libraries, now forgotten and neglected. As the result of the scenes he had just witnessed, his absorption in other schemes was temporarily but entirely dissipated. Journeys to Delaware and Pennsylvania, appeals to the public, and even legal proceedings followed, all in the interest of slaves and finally came the publication of the work just mentioned and entitled:

"A portraiture of domestic slavery in the United States: with reflections on the practicability of restoring the moral rights of



the slave, without impairing the legal privileges of the possessor ; and a project of a colonial asylum for free persons of colour : including memoirs of facts on the interior traffic in slaves, and on kidnapping.

Illustrated with engravings. By Jesse Torrey, Jun., Physician. Phila. 1817."

This work of Torrey's seems to have been, up to recent years, the only one which rescued his name from utter oblivion. Extensive search of biographical, historical and genealogical works hardly reveals even his name. Students of slavery now and again refer to the work just mentioned as interesting and noteworthy, but say nothing of the man. In September, 1898, Mr. F. J. Teggart of Stanford University called attention in a letter to the *Nation*, to the fact that Torrey published other works, noting especially his interest in libraries as evidenced in "*The Intellectual Torch*;" but Mr. Teggart's interest seems to have ended therewith, and his letter not to have attracted especial notice. In 1909 the writer of this introduction noted in a second hand catalog the following entry:—

"*The Intellectual Torch*; developing an original, economical and expeditious plan for the universal dissemination of Knowledge and Virtue by means of Free Public Libraries, etc. By Dr. Jesse Torrey, 12 mo., orig. wrappers, pp. 36. Ballston Spa, 1817."

To anyone watching for *Librarians*, especially concerning the United States, this promised a treasure, but the fact that the bookseller's entry was made in the very shadow of one of the great libraries of the country, made it seem likely that the order for the pamphlet would meet with the response, familiar and funereal in sound to bookbuyers, "*Sold*." But such was not the case. The pamphlet arrived and arousing the interest of the editors of the *Librarian's Series* is reprinted herewith. In its matter it speaks for itself when the date of its publication is considered. That its author deserves some notice and memory by American librarians,

at least more than he has received, seems also self-evident. The history of the movement for free libraries in America remains to be written and quite properly so. History can hardly be written until it is fully made and the passing of time gives vision for its writing. Fifty years will more than cover the period usually assigned hitherto to this movement. But beginnings, foreshadowings, should be noted while they may still be traced : and here is a man establishing a century ago, a "free library and reading society," whose name is never mentioned in biographical dictionary, library history or even in the conversation of librarians !

What follows hereafter concerning Jesse Torrey's life, his plans, hopes and actions has been gleaned almost entirely from autobiographical remarks and sentences scattered thro his works. Gaps in the record remain to be filled and statements to be absolutely verified. He was a man of many and varying interests, invariably considered by him from the point of view of the public good. Whatever future investigators may discover or say of him, it would now seem that his chief point of interest is foreshadowed in his own saying : —

"I consider myself the first projector of free libraries ; and I believe this method of disseminating information universally, to be as great an improvement upon the ordinary mode of conducting libraries, as the Lancasterian scheme is upon the common way of elementary instruction. I cannot conceive any way that governments, or wealthy philanthropists, can apply their surplus funds to greater advantage, in preventing vice, poverty and misery, and promoting virtue, prosperity, and happiness in society, than by furnishing every town or parish with a well selected moral and philosophical library, either at prime cost or gratuitously."

(Extract from Torrey's letter to President John Adams, dated New Lebanon, 18 Jan., 1820 ; printed in his "Herald of Knowledge," Washington, 1822, page 21.)

## LIFE OF JESSE TORREY

Jesse Torrey seems to have been born near New Lebanon, Columbia County, N. Y., on May 25th, 1787. The statement is made thus advisedly, because no complete record has been found. He continually makes statements, however, the dates of which are ascertainable, qualifying them with such expressions as "at the age of seventeen years" etc., so that it is clear from them that his birth year was 1787. Coupling this with a phrase in his "Portraiture of slavery," where he says that he is conscious of "being a native citizen and of having commenced my life coevally with its constitutional organization, occurring at the precise hour of the convocation of the guardians of its liberties," a phrase that can only refer to the meeting of the Federal Convention which assembled May 25th, 1787, it seems fairly conclusive also that this is the exact date of his birth. An old gambrel roofed house in which his family lived for a time, still stands on West Street of what is now called Lebanon Springs. His father, Jesse Torrey, Senior, probably came to New Lebanon, from Lebanon, Conn. He served in the Revolutionary War and Jesse Torrey, Jr., alludes with some feeling to his services as of great courage and ending in entire loss of health. Royal Torrey, brother of Jesse Torrey, Junior, also served in the War of 1812. From his earliest years Torrey seems to have been devoted to books and reading, indeed his application to study brought illness. In later years his constant effort was to encourage the reading and use of books by other youths, but he on one occasion tempers his advice thus: "After having



Silhouette of Jesse Torrey, copy of the original in the possession of Rev. Joseph Hooper, of Durham, Connecticut, who lent the same to Mr. Virgin for reproduction here



endeavored to demonstrate to our youth the advantages of knowledge and mental improvement, I should consider myself guilty of a neglect of duty, to omit cautioning them against excessive reading and study; which is but little less pernicious to health, than other kinds of intemperance. Never more than eight hours daily, should be habitually devoted to study, or any inactive employment; nor less than three in active exercise, either at labour, riding, walking, or active but moderate recreation.

" Having, myself, been severely injured by intense, unremitted study, as well as by excessive exertions, my sentiments are the result of experience, of the pernicious effects of both. It would, undoubtedly, promote the literary progress, as well as the health of students of academies, colleges, etc., to require them to labour two or three hours, daily, either on a farm, in a garden, or mechanical workshop." (Herald of Knowledge, p. 30.)

His "insatiable appetite for reading," led him far afield; his published works are so replete with quotations as often to make it difficult to distinguish his own sentiments from those of the author quoted, and the range of his choice is unlimited. Homer, Seneca, Horace, Addison, Burns, Sterne, Goldsmith, Cowper, and among Americans, Barlow, Jefferson, Rush, Franklin, Weems, all of these he cites by quotation or title. Here are some of the titles he mentions as having read before reaching the age of fourteen: "The Beauties of History, or Examples of Virtue and Vice, taken from real life, two volumes by L. M. Stretch, Burton's Lectures, Knox's Essays, Goldsmith's Essays, The Spectator, History of Sanford and Merton, Seneca's Morals, Plutarch's Lives, Rollin's Ancient History." The extent and variety of this reading was in some degree due to the kindness of an unnamed lawyer whom he mentions in *The Intellectual Torch* as inviting him "to make as much use of his excellent library" as he wished. Another friend, Dr. Moses Younglove, whom he also mentions in *The Torch*, gave him further encouragement and aid in

securing books and became his confidant regarding the project of establishing free libraries.

Younglove, an eminent citizen among the early settlers of Columbia County, and a skillful physician for his time, was plainly a man of wealth and culture. It may well have been that Torrey thought of him as one of the philanthropists whose aid he hoped for. During his acquaintance with him at any rate, there developed in Torrey's mind the scheme he was about to put into actual practice, and which would give him his greatest claim to the interest of posterity. Its growth is traced in the pamphlet reprinted in this volume; but in another work of Torrey's, "The Herald of Knowledge; or An Address to the Citizens of the United States proposing a New System of National Instruction," Washington, 1822, so many more details are given of the early development of his idea than are related in "The Torch," that they seem worthy of incorporation here: "the suggestion occurred, that governments, associations, or wealthy individuals, might *promote* if not accomplish that object ( the extension of useful reading ) by establishing in cities, towns, villages and parishes, *Free Circulating Libraries*, to be equally accessible to all classes of the community, including, particularly, the rising generation of both sexes, over ten or twelve years of age.

"Deeply impressed with the importance of this mode of placing knowledge within reach of every member of society, whether rich or poor, and wishing to demonstrate the practicability and utility of the project, by experiment, I applied to Dr. Moses Younglove, of Hudson, to aid me in establishing a free juvenile library in my own neighbourhood. This gentleman had previously resided in New Lebanon, and had already shown a friendship towards me by accommodating my taste for reading. But he endeavoured to dissuade me from attempting to execute my project, and to convince me that it would not be in my power to divert the attention of youth from their former favourite amusements, to

books, and that my perseverance would terminate in '*chagrin*.' My confidence, however, in a contrary result was not shaken in the least. I was much chagrined to see a scheme, which I firmly believed would ultimately emancipate the human race from the slavery of body and mind, thus discouraged at the outset. I then directed my endeavours to the institution of a juvenile library society, under the denomination of 'The Juvenile Society for the Acquisition of Knowledge,' and commenced a subscription of money and books, leaving the amount optional with the contributor. After calling on almost every house in the parish, during the winter evenings in the year 1803 and 4, I finally succeeded in obtaining a considerable number of books (some of which were lent) and about twelve dollars in cash, with which I purchased as many volumes of books in the city of Albany. The amount generally subscribed (except for books) was from twenty-five to fifty cents. On the 12th of March, 1804, the library was opened, free for the equal use of every youth, of either sex, from twelve to twenty-one years of age, on signing the constitution; but they generally subscribed from twelve and a half cents to one dollar. As there is seldom a youth in that district of country that has not been taught the art of reading, the acceptance of the privilege was unanimous, and its effects evidently beneficial.\*

"The success of the institution was equal to my expectations; and several months after its commencement, Dr. Younglove, having heard of the progress of it, wrote letters to me on the subject, and sent at different times, a considerable number of books, and offered his assistance. The following is a copy of one of his letters:

\*A general taste for reading was excited among the youth of both sexes, which they will probably retain through life. A few years ago, I met with an intelligent, respectable young man, in a different part of the country, who assured me that he should always feel under obligations to me for the benefits he received from that library; recollecting, he said, that I had invited him to commence reading it as soon as he was twelve years of age.



*Hudson, 19th September, 1804*

*SIR:*

I have now received your letter of the 16th inst. in answer to mine of an anterior date, in which, through mistake, I referred to books I put out for you when your father was here, and which I now recollect were never sent; among them were two Chinese volumes (*Chinese Traveller*). Therefore, I desire you to take the first from Mr. T——'s, and I will send you the second. Among the few books I then put out for your library, were several volumes of J. J. Rousseau, but considering that he inculcates a preference of savage ignorance to mental refinement, I believe they had better not be sent, as ill-suited to your laudable plan of useful instruction to youth. Other small tracts, one or two of which I thought to send, I am inclined to think you have already. On the whole, when convenient, send me a list of your books, that I may know how to assist you, by sending or recommending to you such as I think yet wanting.

I am gratified to find your endeavours promising of utility, so far beyond what I anticipated when you first consulted me; for considering your youth and inexperience, I then feared your sagacity would be insufficient; but I must now do you the justice to acknowledge the contrary result.

From your friend,  
M. Younglove "

With this extract and the facts given in the reprint in the following pages, our knowledge of the New Lebanon Library ends. That it continued to exist for some years, that it numbered its readers at least by the hundreds, and produced beneficial results in individual cases is evident. Before tracing Torrey's further library activities and life, however, it seems worth while to bring together and emphasize several points in his library ideals.

First of all, libraries must be free. Time and again he insists

upon this point in his various works. Funds might be collected through the subscriptions of friends and pledges of members, as they were at New Lebanon, but "indigence" was not to keep readers away. At New Lebanon he expressly says, "many were admitted who contributed nothing." For the carrying on of his plan in the future, he desired and believed in securing government aid, local or national. With a clear eye he saw plainly that a liquor tax would be largely remunerative and raise funds from a source capable of bearing taxation, and such measures he continually advocated.

Secondly, there must be libraries for *all* without distinction of age, sex, or condition. His emphasis is at first laid upon their advantages to youth. "The New Lebanon organization was a distinctly juvenile one, ages 12 to 21, but in his later works as his conception of the library grows, provision is plainly made for persons over twenty-one, and he advocates libraries for such special classes as the inmates of public and charitable institutions, apprentices, the farming population and even the slaves.

Of the ten years of Torrey's life following his establishment of the New Lebanon Library, little is known. Under the influence, perhaps, of his friend and adviser, Dr. Younglove, he secured a medical education, and his name appears on the title-page of several of his works as Jesse Torrey, Jun., Physician. He actively followed his profession for a time at least in Pittsfield, Mass., forming a "Medical co-partnership" there on December first, 1814, with one Amasa Ford. The partnership, of which a rather extraordinary advertisement appeared in the Pittsfield Sun during December, 1814, was dissolved soon afterward, on May 23, 1815, by mutual consent. His only recorded medical publication is a work upon contagious diseases with the following title; "A dissertation on the causes, preventions and remedies of plague, yellow fever, cholera, dysentery, and other pestilential,

epidemic or contagious diseases . . . Containing outlines of a new, uniform, physiological system of medical science and practice, predicated upon the known laws of nature and chemical affinity." Phila., J. Grigg, 1832.

Whether wearied at this time, 1815, with the practice of medicine or roused in some way to a recollection of his earlier intention to foster the establishment of libraries, it is impossible to say. At any rate he resolved now, in so many words, to "commence" exertions for the general establishment of free libraries. With this thought in mind, probably preparing his "Intellectual Torch" en route, he travelled through Pennsylvania, Maryland and Virginia, availing himself of his stay in Virginia to visit President Madison at his home and present the project to him, and finally located in Washington in the fall of the year. Madison expressed his "decided approbation of the plan, and particularised some of the benefits which he thought would result from it." \* Addressing letters to various statesmen and governors, Torrey began writing for the newspapers, notably the *National Intelligencer* of Washington. His efforts were attracting attention, and he had ready for the press the small volume of reprinted newspaper articles on this and other subjects, entitled the "Intellectual Flambeau" when the incident occurred described in the beginning of this introduction. The sight of manacled slaves on the streets of the Capital roused in him intense indignation and sympathy, and drove from his mind, for some months, all thought of libraries and popular education. Taking measures to provide for the distribution by mail of the *Flambeau*, which appeared in February, 1816, he devoted himself at once to the composition of a new work on the evils of slavery.\*

This book, his "Portraiture of Domestic Slavery," appeared at Philadelphia in the early winter of 1816-17. It is the longest and in many respects the most consistent, well-planned work

\* *Herald of Knowledge*, p. 12.

which Torrey wrote. He did not seek or anticipate immediate abolition of slavery. For the present he desired humane treatment of the bondmen, and urged their owners to be "guardians, patrons, benefactors and neighbours" to them; in the future he advocated gradual redemption by governmental purchase. He was especially moved by the wrongs suffered by slaves who had been freed and afterwards kidnapped into slavery again, brought legal suits himself to secure the restitution of their liberty and aided in raising subscriptions to defray the legal expenses of the trials. In recognition of his efforts, the Pennsylvania Society for the Abolition of Slavery and the Relief of Free Negroes unlawfully held in bondage, voted him a formal letter of thanks in August, 1816. A second edition of the "Portraiture," published in 1818 at Ballston Spa, N. Y., was a smaller work with much less matter, and does not contain the curious and interesting plates "designed and published by Jesse Torrey," engraved by Goodman, Piggot, Rider and Lawson, which have made the first edition a book sought for by collectors not interested in slavery or Torrey. In 1822 there was published in London what may be regarded as a third edition. Under the title "American Slave Trade," it was edited with a preface by William Cobbett, the English politician, and publicist, who probably read the original work and may have met its author during the years 1817 to 1819, which he spent in America.

After the first publication of the "Portraiture," Torrey returned to his library project. As he narrates in the "Torch," he addressed a sketch of his plan to Roberts Vaux of Philadelphia, on June 4, 1817. That the suggestion bore fruit in school libraries, and directly influenced the establishment in Philadelphia in 1820 of the Apprentices' Free Library, an institution which is still in existence and doing good work, is evidenced by the following letter from Vaux to Torrey, which does not appear in the "Torch":

*Philadelphia, 1st Mo. 21, 1822*

"*Respected Friend:*

In reply to thy letter of the 7th inst. I feel no hesitation in saying, that my mind was directed to the consideration of promoting the establishment of libraries for young persons, by thy publications on that subject. The utility of the small libraries, attached to some of our Lancasterian free schools in the city and liberties of Philadelphia, as well as the benefits which flow from the Apprentices' Library, deserve emphatic remarks; whilst it is but justice to thyself to acknowledge, that the institution of the first is the result of thy suggestions, and perhaps the last establishment might not have been undertaken if the advantages of the original experiment had not been shown.

Respectfully,

Dr. Torrey

Roberts Vaux."

On August 6, 1817, Torrey signed the preface of the *Intellectual Torch*. It was presumably published at once, as its title-page is dated 1817. Inasmuch as it is reprinted here verbatim, and space has already been given to consideration of its most important contents,—Torrey's plans for the establishment of free libraries,—it does not need further treatment now, except on one point. The natural question arises, on reading the title-page, why reprint the second edition? This edition has been used because no first has been found. Diligent search and inquiry have failed to locate it, and it seems doubtful if it exists, under this title, at least. One suggestion seems possible, especially from the similarity in titles. Torrey may have regarded the "*Flambeau*," which he published pseudonymously, as the first issue of the *Torch*. Some of the material of the *Flambeau* is used in the *Torch*: much is omitted, so much as to cast doubt on this last hypothesis. What the author had in mind in writing "*Second edition*" cannot now be stated with certainty.

Incidental to the circulation of the Torch in various places, (in 1822, five years later, the author stated he had circulated about eight thousand memorials for the establishment of libraries in the Torch and Moral Instructor combined),\* Torrey takes occasion later to object to the limitations of library organizations founded only for apprentices. His pamphlet had been distributed very generously in Boston during the winter of 1817-18; in 1820 was founded the Mechanics Apprentices Library there, whether in consequence of any suggestion contained in the Torch or not, he does not know. In 1822 he writes of this Library: "I hope, however, that the discriminative appellation of '*Apprentices' Library*' will be superseded by some title more indicative of relief to the intellectual wants of numerous other classes of the rising generation of both sexes. . . . I can perceive no sufficient reason for any classification of libraries for youth, other than opening them on different days or hours for the delivery of books to the two sexes. *The Conversations on Chemistry and Natural Philosophy, The Spectator, Thompson's Seasons, &c.*, are equally interesting to either sex; and there is no danger that young ladies will trespass on the claims of apprentices to the use of works on architecture and mechanics."† Few of our early founders of libraries were so thoughtful of women as possible readers, or admitted so unqualifiedly their existence! He proceeds: "If there must be any preference to either sex, in the extension of mental improvement, let it be to the female. Instruction is reproductive, *ad infinitum*; and the domestic station of females gives them the best opportunity of transmitting virtuous sentiments to future generations."

In 1819 appeared Torrey's "Moral Instructor and Guide to Virtue and Happiness." Both this and the "Pleasing Companion for Little Girls and Boys" published in 1824 were practically

\* Herald of Knowledge, p. 15.

† Herald of Knowledge, p. 11.

schoolbooks and naturally were his works which secured widest circulation. The Moral Instructor reached a second edition in the same year as its first, November, 1819, and by 1826 was in its tenth edition. It was, as its full title indicates, a collection of readings, original and selected, on ethical subjects without reference to religion. Some matter is inserted from the Torch relating to libraries and intemperance, and in an appendix appears again the Constitution of the New Lebanon Library Society. Later editions are rather extensively altered from the first, not in character, but in quantity.

As already stated, the Moral Instructor was intended for school use; it is advertised as "The New American School Book"; in connection with it, then, may well be mentioned Torrey's other works of this nature. The Pleasing Companion, copyrighted in 1824, by 1835 had reached its twenty-fifth edition, and was still being published as late as 1844. It is a collection of fables, poetry, stories from Maria Edgeworth, Sanford and Merton, etc.; and designed "for use in primary schools and domestic nurseries." One work mentioned by Allibone as by Torrey and quoted thus; "First Book (Primer)" has not been traced. The title may refer to the next mentioned work. The last of his school text-books to appear was the "Familiar Spelling Book, being a new practical system for teaching English pronunciation and spelling with greater despatch and less fatigue to both instructor and pupil than by the usual method," published at Philadelphia in 1826, but copyrighted in 1825. The volume contains reading lessons also, in one of which, a dialogue entitled "The Quilting Party," Torrey ingeniously introduces descriptions of his other works, The Pleasing Companion and The Moral Instructor. The praise of the latter comes from the eldest boy of the company, by name Benjamin Franklin. This widely read young person of twelve years, after having acquired and perused "Thirty or forty volumes of voyages" with which he was

"particularly pleased," says that he has "just finished reading one of the best books I have ever read . . . The Moral Instructor and Guide to Virtue. My father bought it for me about a month ago. It has a great deal of good advice in it about doing right, and behaving well. Not many children can understand much of it, till they are nearly as old as I am, but I will give you a short account of what it contains, hoping it will give you an inclination to read it yourselves, as soon as you are old enough." Benjamin then proceeds to entertain his playmates with a two page analysis of its contents closing thus: "And finally it contains a constitution and plan for free libraries for youth; so that all can have books to read, that wish." The rest of the children whose precocity is the less explainable since they rejoice in such names as Thomas Jefferson, Andrew Jackson, John Adams and Emma Willard, speak of other books.

One wonders in noticing their names, if Torrey could have known Emma Willard. She had opened her famous school in Troy, for girls, in 1821, five years previous to the publication of this book, having been teaching in other places with steadily growing fame for fifteen years. Several of the girls join in the symposium, the last of whom most conveniently has "just finished" Torrey's other work, *A Pleasing Companion for Boys and Girls*. She too likes this "better than any other book that I ever read," analyses it at a length of two pages and expresses the hope in closing that they will "all soon have a *Pleasing Companion* of their *own*."

Were these books, intended for school use and likely, if sold at all, to sell in large numbers, another phase of Torrey's zeal for popular education, or were they mere pot boilers, written and compiled to secure means of livelihood while he spent the greater part of his time in the furtherance of his more ambitious scheme for free public libraries? It would be difficult to say, were it not for the evidence afforded by the preface and introduction to the



volumes. Having read these one can hardly doubt Torrey's absolute sincerity in their publication or desire to smooth and make interesting the path of teacher and pupil alike.

Despite the time which he must have expended in their preparation his labors for library growth continued. In 1820 he resolves anew to "persevere in the cause of libraries and knowledge," writes ex-President John Adams on the subject, and visits New York City to make "preparatory arrangements for the establishment of a free juvenile library" for all youth over ten years of age.\* It was only a coincidence, perhaps, that in this very year, the General Society of Mechanics and Tradesmen of New York City founded its Apprentices' Library; but it would seem that Jesse Torrey is entitled to some credit for his share in the general agitation which produced the foundation.

Two years passed, and in 1822 Torrey published his last appeal so far as we now know, to the public on behalf of libraries. From the *Herald of Knowledge*, extensive quotation has already been made and no detailed description need be given. It contains the sanest, maturest presentation of the cause nearest his heart. The *Torch*, by priority of publication and its fuller exhibition of Torrey's personality, deserved and is given herewith its reprinting, but the *Herald* abundantly deserves reproduction as well, and is apparently rarer than the *Torch*.

From this time on, the known details of Torrey's life, aside from dates of publication, become few. Various editions of earlier works appeared but whether revised by the author or publisher is often uncertain. In 1824 appeared the *Pleasing Companion*; in 1826 the *Familiar Spelling Book*, both already described; then after a blank of six years appears his *Dissertation on the Plague*, indicating a suddenly revived interest in his profession. One other work remains, not previously alluded to here, and of a character entirely different from those already described.

\* *Herald of Knowledge*, p. 21-2.

Early in the investigation of the life of Torrey a tradition was found that he had at one time edited, written or compiled a sort of periodical called "The National Library." No one had seen the work, no one could produce it, but the tradition persisted. Again a bookseller's catalog, on this occasion, of an auction, intervened and brought his work to light. Through the zeal of the librarian of the American Antiquarian Society, they are now the possessors of a few numbers of the "National Library," conducted by Jesse Torrey, Jr. A fortnightly of sixteen pages an issue, octavo in size, the National Library and Advocate of Civil and Religious Liberty or Universal Repository of Useful Knowledge,—to give it its full title,—was published in Philadelphia by J. H. Sleeper. Its first issue appears to have been in June, 1833; the Antiquarian Society file,—incomplete,—begins with August 28th of that year, which is volume one, number six. It lived till the end of the year, and then appears a similar paper in arrangement and matter, but with a new title, "The Impartial Examiner," Phila., Jan. 1, 1834, Volume one, No. 1, and this announcement for the patrons of the National Library: "Dr. Jesse Torrey, Jr., having withdrawn from the editorial department of the National Library, a few individuals of liberal minds in this city have concluded to superintend the editorial department, and as the late editor . . . may at some future time renew his periodical through the means of another publisher, we have concluded an alteration of the title would be proper." As might be judged from this announcement, the contents of both papers are extremely "liberal". By far the greater part of the material is religious and controversial; attacks, often violent, upon Methodists, Baptists, Episcopalians and other churches are made. Nearly all the articles are signed with pseudonyms or initials. Hence, it is difficult to tell how much share Torrey had in producing the paper's contents. It is significant that with his leaving it, the name should have been changed. Except for the title,

the word "library" does not occur in its pages. With the disappearance of the National Library as a title, there vanished from sight also the man whose chief interest in life had been the securing of libraries for the people. Where he died, or when, we do not know.

Edward Harmon Virgin

New York

September, 1912.

## THE PORTRAIT OF JESSE TORREY, JR.

The portrait of Torrey reproduced in this reprint seems to have been separately engraved and inserted at will in his various works. Copies of the *Intellectual Flambeau*, *Moral Instructor*, first and second editions, and the second edition of the *Portraiture* have been noted in various libraries as containing portraits.

As an engraving and the joint work of Goodman and Piggott who cut the plate, it is fairly rare, their work together occurring very seldom. Both engravers were well known in their day, and served as apprentices together before forming their partnership in Philadelphia. In addition to their signature, "Goodman & Piggott, Sc.", the cut is also signed "Ra. Peale, Del.", presumably Raphael Peale. Judged from this portrait, the engraving in the *Portraiture*, entitled "The Author noting down the narratives of several free-born people of colour who had been kidnapped," is a very good likeness. There is also in existence a silhouette of Torrey, a reproduction of which is included in this volume.

E. H. V.



# CHRONOLOGICAL LIST OF TORREY'S WORKS AND EDITIONS.

		Copies located
1816	Intellectual Flambeau. Wash. 16 mo.	5
1817	Portraiture of Slavery. Phila. 8 vo. Copyrighted Jan. 25	14
1817	Intellectual Torch. Ed. 2. Ballston Spa. 12 mo. Preface dated Aug. 6	6
1818	Portraiture of Slavery. Ed. 2. Ballston Spa. 12 mo.	7
1819	Moral Instructor. [Ed. 1.] Ballston Spa. 12 mo.	1
1819	Moral Instructor. Ed. 2. Albany. 12 mo. November	4
1822	Herald of Knowledge. Wash. 12 mo.	3
1822	American Slave Trade. (New ed. of Portraiture) Lond. 12 mo.	4
1823	Moral Instructor. Ed. 3. Wash. 12 mo.	1
1824	Moral Instructor. Ed. 4. Phila. 12 mo.	2
1824	Pleasing Companion [Ed. 1. Phila.] Copyright date given in later edition as March 24, 1824.	No copy located
1825	Moral Instructor. Ed. 5	No copy located but quoted by Teggart
1826	Familiar Spelling Book. Phila. 12 mo.	1
1826	Moral Instructor. Ed. 10. Phila. 12 mo.	1

1830	Pleasing Companion. Ed. 2. N. Y., 12 mo.	1
1832	Dissertation on plague. Phila. 8 vo.	3
1833	National Library. Phila. 8 vo.	1
1836	Pleasing Companion. Ed. 25. Phila. 12 mo.	1
1844	Pleasing Companion. Phila. 12 mo.	2

## UNTRACED

"First Book (Primer)" Quoted thus only by Allibone.

All of Torrey's works were published under his name except the first, *The Intellectual Flambeau*. This is said on its title page to be by "*Discipulus Libertatis atque Humanitatis*."







# **The Intellectual Torch**



# THE INTELLECTUAL TORCH;

DEVELOPING AN ORIGINAL, ECONOMICAL AND  
EXPEDITIOUS PLAN FOR THE

UNIVERSAL DISSEMINATION

OF

KNOWLEDGE AND VIRTUE;

BY MEANS OF

FREE PUBLIC LIBRARIES.

INCLUDING ESSAYS ON

THE USE OF DISTILLED SPIRITS.

---

*By Doctor JESSE TORREY, Jun.*

Founder of the Free Juvenile Library, established at New Lebanon, in the  
year 1804; and Author of "A Portraiture of Domestic  
Slavery in the United States," &c.

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*SECOND EDITION, REVISED BY THE AUTHOR;*

Selections being omitted and original matter added.

*BALLSTON SPA:*

PUBLISHED BY THE AUTHOR.

J. COMSTOCK, PRINTER.

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1817

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Reprinted with an Introduction  
The Elm Tree Press Woodstock Vermont  
1912



# THE INTELLECTUAL TORCH.

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*"Man's general ignorance, old as the flood,  
For ages on ages has steep'd him in blood."*

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KNOWLEDGE is essentially necessary to the well-being and happiness of every member of the human family, whether male or female, rich or poor.

To ignorance may be traced, the origin of most of the vices, crimes, errors and follies that distract and destroy mankind. It is the mother of misery :—a mazy labyrinth of perpetual night. Knowledge, on the contrary, is a torch perpetually flaming, which enables its possessor, to see clearly and understand every thing that surrounds him. It affords certain consolation, in all cases of difficulty and danger. Besides the intellectual pleasure, derived from the *possession* of knowledge, which far exceeds that of animal sensuality, the well informed man, (mechanic, farmer, or of whatever profession) being acquainted with the laws of nature—with moral and physical causes and effects, is capable of providing, generally with certainty, for the prosperity and security of himself and his family.

Confucius, the ancient Chinese Philanthropist, who disseminated virtue and happiness over a vast Empire, and is there venerated as a messenger from God, to this day, says, "Human

nature came to us from Heaven pure and perfect ; but in process of time, ignorance, the passions and evil examples have corrupted it. All consists in restoring it to its primitive beauty ; and to be perfect we must ascend to that point from which we have fallen. Obey Heaven and follow the orders of him who governs it. Love your neighbor as yourself."—"Bad as the times are I shall do all I can to recall men to virtue ; for in virtue are all things."

While our generous Legislatures are imitating the policy of European Monarchies, by making liberal appropriations for enlightening the *few*, by the endowment of Colleges and Universities, would not the *many* (who, in this country, supply their legislators with *power* as well as money) cordially cherish a policy, calculated, at the same time, to diffuse a small portion of the accumulated treasures of intellectual light of the present era, amongst themselves and their own children.\*

Joseph Lancaster has discovered a method, which gives incalculable facility to the universal dissemination of the preliminary rudiments of science ; and is rapidly gaining general assent in the United States. But the education of youth should not cease with the expiration of their attendance on public schools. The chasm between this period and that of their *corporeal* maturity, contains many stumbling blocks and dangerous snares. The art of reading, without books to read, is to the mind, as is a set of good teeth to the body, without food to masticate ; they will alike suffer the evils of disease, decay, and eventual ruin.

The printing press is the main engine, and books are the rapid

\* The late enthusiastic Champion of the rights of man, Samuel Adams, in a letter to his venerable friend, John Adams, exerting his utmost eloquence to convince him of the superiority of the representative system of legislation, exclaims—"In order to secure the perpetuation of our excellent form of government to future generations, let Divines and Philosophers, Statesmen and Patriots, unite their endeavors to renovate the age, by impressing the minds of the people with the importance of educating their little Boys and Girls," &c.

vehicles for the general distribution of knowledge. Yet notwithstanding the prodigious difference between the cost of books within the last 400 years, and the whole anterior space of time, but few comparatively can meet the expense of private libraries. Computing the leisure of every youth to be two hours daily from the age of ten to twenty-one years, independent of the requisite time for labor, sleep, eating, recreation, &c. and it is sufficient for reading a library of seven hundred volumes duodecimo, of 300 pages each. This only season for laying the foundation of a virtuous and happy life, to the greatest portion of mankind, is totally lost. It is only necessary to offer knowledge to the *voluntary* acceptance of youth, in a proper manner, to produce an ardent appetite for it.

Intellectual cultivation is the basis of virtue and happiness. As mental improvement advances, vice and crimes recede. That desirable happy era, when the spirit of peace and benevolence shall pervade all the nations which inhabit the earth, when both national and personal *slavery* shall be annihilated; when nations and individuals shall cease to hunt and destroy each other's lives and property; when the science and implements of human preservation and felicity, shall be substituted for those of slaughter and woe; will commence, precisely at the moment when the rays of useful knowledge and wisdom, shall have been extended to the whole human family. By useful knowledge, I mean, not only an acquaintance with valuable arts and sciences, but also an understanding of our various moral and religious duties, in relation to our creator, to our neighbor, and to ourselves. By wisdom, I mean that kind of sagacity, which influences us to regulate our passions and conduct, in conformity to the precepts of knowledge, reason and religion. Until an approach towards such a state of things, is effected, the names of *peace*, *liberty*, and *security*, on this earth, will differ but little from an *ignis fatuus*, either to monarchs or their vassals. At present, violence bears



universal and imperial sway ; and ignorance is the magic spell which sustains its sceptre. This dense mist which enshrouds nearly the whole human race, can be penetrated and removed, with much greater certainty and facility, by the mild but invincible rays of intellectual light, than by opposing violence with violence, and evil to evil. The countryman in *Æsop's Fables*, was induced to throw off his cloak, by the gentle but melting rays of the *physical* sun, after the wind had exerted its fury in vain. What a boundless empire of glory and *unalloyed* bliss, might the monarchs and governments of the different nations, and all possessors of wealth attain, by causing their numerous subjects and brethren, perpetually encompassed by the snares of ignorance, vice, and oppression, to be instructed ; thereby elevating poor degraded afflicted human nature, to that scale of dignity in the creation, which was evidently assigned to it by the supreme parent of the universe. In our country, particularly, instruction ought to be universal. For virtue only can sustain and perpetuate our political organization. " With knowledge and virtue the united efforts of ignorance and tyranny may be defied." (Miller, governor of North Carolina.) " In a government where all may aspire, to the highest offices in the state, it is essential that education should be placed within the reach of all.—Without intelligence, self government, our dearest privilege cannot be exercised." (Nicholas, governor of Virginia.) " Without knowledge, the blessings of liberty cannot be fully enjoyed or long preserved." (President Madison.)

General Washington, in his valedictory address to the people of the United States, says, " Promote then, as objects of primary importance, institutions for the *general diffusion of knowledge*, in proportion as the structure of the government gives force to public opinion, it is essential that public opinion should be enlightened."

But it has been questioned whether our constitution authorises

the adoption of measures for the diffusion of knowledge and science. If our constitution does not now authorise measures which are likely to produce the greatest possible benefit to the country, and security to its liberties, it ought *without delay* to be so amended that it should.

Let American Legislators, both national and sectional, perform their duty to their country, and its posterity ; and to mankind, by listening to the wise counsels of many conspicuous living sages, and pursue without hesitation the inestimable "*parting advice*" of George Washington, Benjamin Rush, Samuel Adams, and other departed friends and patrons of man ; and establish public schools, and judiciously selected free public circulating libraries, in every part of the Republic. And as all men are vitally interested in the universal dissemination of knowledge and virtue, let all classes combine their influence and means, in aiding the cause of human happiness.

" Postpone, O ye Sages all meaner debates—  
 Convinced that 'tis light, must establish our states ;  
 Dispense and diffuse it—gild empire like day,  
 Convinced that with freemen full knowledge is sway ! "  
 " 'Tis ignorance mainly binds people in chains,  
 'Tis this too the empire of Folly maintains !  
 Vice shrinks from instruction like Ghost from the light :  
 And Despots shun noon-tide and covet the night."

The discovery of the art of printing and of manufacturing paper, gives us a vast ascendancy over our ancestors in the propagation of knowledge. Dr. Darwin very properly, and very elegantly, calls the " PRINTING PRESS " the most useful of modern inventions ; the capacious reservoir of human knowledge, whose branching streams diffuse sciences, arts and morality, through all nations and ages."

Let us suppose Confucius, Socrates and Seneca, were permitted to resume the possession of their former bodies and estates ; and remain on the earth for five years.— Would they not be transported with ecstasy, on beholding a paper-mill and a printing press. And yet would they not weep with regret and wonder, to find how few of the inhabitants even of civilized and apparently enlightened portions of the earth, are in possession of the inestimable moral precepts which they had, with so much labor and solicitude, prepared and bequeathed to mankind ? Seneca possessed an immense quantity of wealth. Would he not seize the opportunity with rapturous avidity, and invite his two benevolent colleagues to share with him the happiness, of enlisting, with his treasures, every paper-mill, printing press, type-maker and printer, that they could find, and devote the five years, totally, to the propagation of their wisdom to the remotest regions of the Globe.

"It is a truth which cannot be too strongly impressed, that of all our exertions for the benefit of our fellow creatures, the education of the poor is the most efficacious." — [*Moir.*]

Finally, that ignorance is generally the radical source of vice and poverty, with their consequent train of complicated calamities ; and that intelligence generally produces results directly the reverse, are truths no longer problematical. Facts have shown their claims to the consideration of the legislator and the moralist. It now only remains to ascertain the most expeditious, economical, and practicable method, by which the universal diffusion of useful knowledge can be accomplished.

In the early period of my youth, a gentleman of the law, who resided in the vicinity of my father's house, at New-Lebanon, (N. Y.) kindly invited me to make as much use of his excellent library as I wished, observing that he was pleased to see young persons attached to reading, and glad to encourage them in the improvement of their minds. I accepted the privilege with gratitude,

and improved it with persevering assiduity, as far as my leisure permitted, for several years. I also purchased shares in two public social libraries. At the age of 17 years, convinced of the inestimable benefits of reading useful books, I anxiously desired that they might, if possible, be extended to the great mass of the human family; and endeavored to discover some effective plan for this purpose. Indigence, which in most nations involves the majority, appeared to present the greatest obstacle. Hence the suggestion occurred that governments, or associations of individuals, might promote the object, by establishing in various districts, *free circulating libraries*, to be equally accessible to all classes and sexes without discrimination. With a view to confirm the practicability of the project, as well as to benefit the youth of the vicinity, I commenced a subscription of money and books, for the establishment of a free juvenile library.\* The association consisted of the youth of both sexes, from the age of 12 to 21 years, under the title of "*The juvenile society for the acquisition of knowledge.*" As there is seldom a youth in that district of country, that has not been taught the art of reading, the acceptance of the privilege was unanimous, and its effects evidently salutary. The society and library continued to accumulate for several years. The permanency of the institution has, however, been since interrupted by the frequent rotation of the office of librarian, and by the difficulty of enforcing a compliance, with the bye laws. These inconveniences might be avoided by locating the libraries

\* Dr. Moses Younglove, of the city of Hudson, patronized the library by a donation of about a dozen volumes of books, and addressed to me an encouraging letter, dated at Hudson, 19th September, 1804, which he concludes thus:

"I am much gratified to find your endeavors promising of utility, so far beyond what I anticipated when you first consulted me; for considering your youth and inexperience, I then feared your sagacity would be insufficient, but I must do you the justice to acknowledge the contrary result.

"From your friend,

"M. YOUNGLOVE."

permanently in school-houses or academies, or in the care of some civil magistrate, and by having the bye laws confirmed by the legislature. The choice of suitable books to be purchased or admitted in donations, ought to be decided by a competent committee. Well selected free public libraries, it is believed, would form a very important auxiliary of public instruction, in all our schools, academies, hospitals, alms houses, cantonments, bridewells, gaols, state prisons, penitentiaries, work houses, &c. &c.

The utility of this method of promoting moral improvement might be rendered doubly extensive if governments, or societies were to procure the execution, upon a large scale, of several of the most essential books on the conduct of life, and furnish them to all free library companies, at prime cost.—

Having been at the city of Philadelphia at the time the "Pennsylvania society for promoting public Economy," was instituted I communicated a sketch of the above plan, in a letter dated the 4th June, 1817, to Roberts Vaux, Esq. one of the members of the Common Council of the city, who was the chairman of a committee, appointed by the society, on public schools. He informed me that the committee considered the idea new and valuable, and had instructed him to introduce it in his report of a system of public education which it was contemplated to adopt. He said they considered the plan particularly adapted for the benefit of numerous apprentices, who are prevented, during several years of their service, from attending public schools, by their occupations.

Having formerly published a small volume of anonymous Essays under the title of the "*Intellectual Flambeau*," treating principally on morals and the diffusion of knowledge, (from which, part of the materials of this pamphlet is derived,) the following letters were addressed to me, which, as they contribute to elucidate the subjects now under consideration, I think useful to insert.

*From Samuel L. Mitchell, L. L. D. &c.*

*New York, June 12th, 1816.*

Sir,

The mail brought me, a short time since, a copy of your Intellectual Flambeau. I find thereby that you have exerted your mind zealously and long in favor of beneficence and knowledge. It is agreeable to see your detached essays and fugitive pieces collected into a book. It was fine saying, "gather up the fragments that none be lost."

It is a peculiar feature of our social condition in the Fredish dominions, that information is so generally spread among the people. There is another trait of character, of no less importance, the disposition to do what is right. The theory of those articles of our political constitutions, is derived from the consideration that our citizens, in the exercise of the elective franchise, are wise to understand, and virtuous to do, their duty. And while this state continues, we shall be the happiest nation on earth. But a being possessed of knowledge without virtue is a terrible creature, and comes up to my definition of a devil.

You have done well to oppose the torrent of distilled spirits that is overwhelming the land, and threatening ruin to its human inhabitants. The breaking of the levee at New-Orleans, or the dykes in Holland, is not half so dreadful or destructive to the prospects of the proprietors respectively, as the breach of the barriers of temperance by whiskey and rum. They are the torment and poison of the moral world. Great indeed will be the merit of him who can apply an effectual antidote. In the distribution of praise in this world, sufficient credit is not given to the author of Mahomedan religion for having forbidden the use of vinous liquors. But the effects of ardent spirits are by no means confined to the moral world. They extend to the physical part

of man's constitution, and cause palsies, apoplexies, dropsies, drunkenness, madness, and a number of other woes.

Go on and be not weary in well doing. Be not discouraged ; but continue to render yourself happy in endeavors to better the condition of your fellow-creatures.

Accept the assurance of my esteem and regard.

SAMUEL L. MITCHILL.

*J. Torrey, Jun. Esq.*

*From Isaac Briggs, of the Society of Friends.*

*Wilmington, Del. 6 mo. 12, 1816.*

Esteemed Friend,

With pleasure and approbation I have read thy little book entitled, "The Intellectual Flambeau;" and if this declaration from me be deemed by the author of any importance, it is freely at his service.

It has long been my settled opinion that knowledge diffused among the people, is the best foundation for civil liberty and happiness; and the more extensively it is diffused, the broader and more firm is the foundation, and the more glorious the superstructure.

To perpetuate the blessing of liberty, let the education of youth be considered an important and honorable employment—let those who have plenty assist, gratis, those who have but little—let our youth be taught by precept and example, that in using our reasoning powers, *truth* is the only legitimate object, and that *candor* is always due to an opponent in argument.

Thus a soil may be prepared in the youthful mind, from which will readily spring useful knowledge and the sweet charities of society—and envy, malice, hatred and party-spirit would have little or no room to grow.

Collections of useful and instructive books in different neighborhoods would, in my opinion, powerfully promote all these valuable ends. A very light contribution from the purses of the rich and honorable would, in every neighborhood, without expense to the poorer classes, place much useful knowledge within their reach, and even *invite* them to partake of it. The scheme appears to me fully worthy of an experiment, *fairly made*; and I am glad to find that my friend, the author of the Intellectual Flambeau, has devoted some of his time and talents to objects so interesting.

ISAAC BRIGGS.

*Dr. Jesse Torrey, Jun.*

*From Simon Snyder, Gov. of the state of Pennsylvania.*

Sir,

Ignorance is the dark but broad foundation, upon which the tyrants of the bodies and souls of men erect their thrones. The general diffusion of knowledge is on the other hand the most efficient means of destroying the power of moral and political despotism. Few of mankind comparatively speaking, have the means of procuring and still fewer have the requisite leisure to study and digest extensive systems of ethics or politics. Small tracts are best suited for the perusal of the generality of mankind. Your little volume entitled "The Intellectual Flambeau" appears to me well calculated to diffuse impressively, correct knowledge on the subject of morals, and the political rights of man. Much light on those interesting subjects, is condensed into a small compass, and is within the reach of almost every man, however limited his means or his leisure. Persevere in your laudable work, and may your success equal your wishes, assured that you will reap that reward which results from a consciousness of having



endeavored to promote the present and future happiness of your fellow men.

Accept assurances of  
personal regard from  
SIMON SNYDER.

*Dr. Jesse Torrey, Jun.*

*Harrisburg, 8th Nov. 1816.*

*From N. B. Boileau, Secretary of the state of Pennsylvania.*

*Harrisburg, Nov. 8th, 1816.*

Sir,

I cordially agree with the sentiments expressed by the governor, and join with him wishing your success may be equal to your philanthropic desire—that your little book may have its due effect in correcting the habits of intemperance—the too predominant and prevailing vice of the present day—and that you may enjoy the high satisfaction which springs from an approving heart, and from the evidence that your labor has not been in vain.

With best wishes for your personal welfare  
your ob't. ser't.

N. B. BOILEAU.

*Dr. Jesse Torrey, Jun.*

## A SERIOUS ADDRESS,

*To the Rising Generation of the United States.*

Eminently Favored Youth,

CONTEMPLATE calmly and attentively, the sacred legacy which soon must be committed to your charge, in trust for your successors — and eventually for the whole human

race! You constitute the only insulated *Arrarat*, on which the Olive Branch of Peace, and the "*glad tidings*" of Freedom and Happiness, can be deposited and preserved to a *groaning* World, *drowned* in tears!! Prove yourselves, then, deserving of the exalted office which Providence has assigned you. To do this, it is indispensable that you cultivate your understandings, and store them with the golden treasures of knowledge, philosophy and wisdom. Where these abide Tyranny cannot exist—no more than darkness in the midst of sun beams. Know also that these will preserve you, infallibly, from a species of slavery, much more odious and destructive to human happiness, than the most barbarous political despotism that exists,

Of ignorance, vice, and all the ven'rous passions ;—  
Of intemperance, crimes, and a host of idle fashions.

Virtue and wisdom are the offspring of knowledge ;— and "human happiness, says Seneca, is founded upon wisdom and virtue." And further, that "philosophy gives us a veneration for God, a charity for our neighbor ; teaches us our duty to Heaven, and exhorts to an agreement one with another ; it arms us against all difficulties ; it prompts us to relieve the prisoner, the infirm, the necessitous ; it is the health of the mind ; shines with an original light ; makes us happy and immortal. In poverty it gives us riches or such a state of mind as makes them superfluous."

My young friends remember that you possess within yourselves, the innate germ of wisdom, virtue, happiness — the spirit of God in your hearts, constantly pleading for your own welfare. You have only to listen to this friendly monitor, and feed the sacred spark with the light of instruction and wisdom.

"Wisdom, says Seneca, instructs us in the way of nature ; to live happily ; teaches us what things are good, what evil, that no man can be happy, but he that needs no other happiness but

what he has within himself ; no man to be great or powerful, that is not master of himself. That this is the felicity of human life ; a felicity that can neither be corrupted or extinguished.—Nay, says he, so powerful is virtue, and so gracious is Providence, that every man has a light set up within himself for a guide, which we do all of us both see and acknowledge, though we do not pursue it.\* That a good man is happy within himself, and independent upon fortune : kind to his friend ; *temperate to his enemy : religiously just* ; indefatigably laborious, &c. That *there is not a duty to which Providence has not annexed a blessing.*”

Finally, without taking up the discussion of future rewards and punishments, I must declare my conviction that in our present stage of *temporal existence*, every deviation from the path of rectitude and duty, is as certainly punished with its appropriate penalty, as that pain is the inevitable consequence of thrusting our hands into fire, and indicates an equal deficiency of wisdom and common sense.

Therefore exert yourselves without delay, to secure the means of enlightening your understandings with instruction. For this purpose form yourselves into societies in your respective neighborhoods, and establish *free* libraries, by means of subscriptions, and contributions of books.

“Take fast hold of instruction ; let her not go ; keep her ; for she is thy life.”

[SOLOMON.]

I am not inclined to advise you to restrain yourselves from a rational indulgence in innocent athletic amusements, but *fail not*, if you prefer *genuine* happiness to misery and repentance, to devote the most of your evenings and leisure hours to mental improvement and reading. Read the life of the celebrated Franklin

\* “I know the right, and I approve it too ;  
Condemn the wrong, and yet the wrong pursue.”

POPE.

and follow his advice. But beware of the Syren snares of NOVELS. Is not a beautiful garden, in a state of *living* verdure, and *native* bloom both more entertaining and instructive, than a *heap* of counterfeit artificial flowers made of paper, yielding fruits the most pernicious?

Let your library commence with the following books ; making about 20 volumes. A contribution of 25 cents each from 100 persons would probably defray the cost of the whole of them. The youth, not already trained to depravity, that can read merely these few books, without being fascinated with the pleasures of science, wisdom, benevolence, and moral rectitude, must be a prodigy of stupidity and worthlessness.

The Looking Glass for the Mind, The Newtonian System of Philosophy Explained, Burton's Lectures to Young Ladies, Lady's Library, Mavor's Abridgement of Natural History, Historical Grammar, Blair's Grammar of Chemistry, Joyce's Scientific Dialogues, Seneca's Morals, Translation of Xenophon's Socrates, Priestly's Considerations for the use of Young Men, Baron Knigge's Practical Philosophy of Social Life, or the Art of Conversing with Men, Beauties of History, History of Sanford and Merton, Universal Geography, &c.

While in health, taste not a *single drop* of distilled spirit, for except as a remedy for some diseases, it is a *positive poison* to man or any other animal ; this important fact is demonstrated, not only by chemical analysis, which proves that in the process of fermentation the material of spirit imbibes from the atmosphere a substance, called *oxygen*, the internal application of which is well known to be noxious to animal life ; but also by its effects upon brute animals, some kinds of which it kills\* instantaneously, and impedes the growth of others !

\* An individual who was formerly addicted to the use of distilled spirits, stated that he compelled a fowl to swallow a table spoonful of rum, which produced immediate death !

Accept, beloved youth, these counsels of your sincere friend. Heed them with fidelity ; and peace, contentment, good will, and gladness shall be the companions of your lives.

## TO PHILANTHROPISTS.

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In the hope that the impulse of a disposition "*to do good*," may influence, some magistrate, physician, tutor, preacher, attorney, private citizen, or generous youth, in every district in which these sheets may be circulated ; to volunteer his exertions for the institution of a free library, and reading society, I have procured for publication, a correct copy of the Constitution originally adopted by the Juvenile Library Society at New-Lebanon. It was composed by the writer of these pages, at the age of 17 years. The language or plan can be varied as may be found expedient.

## THE CONSTITUTION

*Of the New Lebanon Juvenile Society for the Acquisition of Knowledge.*

*New-Lebanon, March 12, 1804.*

**W**HEREAS we the youth of New-Lebanon, are fully convinced that it is indispensably necessary for our happiness and welfare, that we cultivate our understandings, improve our morals, and acquire useful knowledge while we are young, and while our minds are susceptible of improvement. And therefore we do hereby agree to associate, and form ourselves into a Society, for the purpose of establishing a Library, improving our minds and acquiring useful Knowledge.—And we do agree ordain and determine:—

1. That this Society shall meet together every first Monday in March, and choose from among themselves, a President, Librarian, Secretary, and a committee of five, who shall transact the business of the Society and continue in office until others are duly elected.

2. The President, or in his absence the Librarian and three others of the committee, shall form a board competent to transact all business of the Society ; or in the absence of the President and Librarian, four of the committee, who shall choose a chairman for the present meeting.

3. It shall be the duty of the President to preside at the meetings and superintend the concerns of the Society ; and to give advice as to the purchase of suitable books, &c.

4. It shall be the business of the Librarian to keep the books carefully that belong to this Society, and write on each of them, that it belongs to "The Library of the New-Lebanon Juvenile Society for the Acquisition of Knowledge ;" to receive all contributions of money or books that may be made by the friends of knowledge and virtue for the encouragement and benefit of the Society ; to receive all books that may be lent to the Society : to keep a separate catalogue of them, and an account of the fines received upon them, which shall be paid to the owners of the books ; to collect fines and money subscribed, which money he shall lay out for books and such other articles as he shall deem necessary to promote the interest of the Society ; to keep a record of the books drawn, and an account, of receipts and expenditures, and to keep all the papers and writings belonging to this Society.

5. It shall be the office of the Secretary to write a record of the proceedings and resolutions of the Society. And as this association is formed with a view to diffuse useful knowledge, and promote virtue as extensively as possible, the Secretary shall exhibit on the meeting house of New Lebanon, once in every six months, an advertisement, inviting all the youth of New Lebanon,

between the age of 12 and 21 years, to join this Society : and the Librarian is authorised to admit all such youth as members of the Society, on signing these articles ; but no person shall be a member of the Society, who is not between the aforesaid ages.

6. It shall be the duty of the committee to examine the books returned at each meeting ; and on all books damaged by ill usage, they shall lay such fines as they shall deem just and reasonable : tearing, greasing, dirtying, and turning leaves down to be considered as damages done by ill usage.

7. The stated monthly meetings of this Society shall be held at the house of the Librarian, on the first Monday in every month in the year, at six o'clock in the afternoon ; when every book before drawn out, shall be returned, in order that they may be inspected and that a new drawing of books may take place. And any member that draws a book and neglects to return it before the stated time aforesaid, shall pay a fine of six cents, and one cent per day thereafter until it is returned ; and if not returned within two months after it was drawn out, the delinquent shall pay for the book at the appraisal of the committee.

8. Any member that is indebted to the Society for fines or otherwise, and neglects to pay the debt within one month after it becomes due, shall be prohibited the use of the Library until it is paid.

9. Any member returning a book, before drawn, to the Librarian, before another meeting, may draw any other one found in the library.

10. The members of this Society shall be divided into six classes, alphabetically, according to the first letters of their surnames, the beginning of the alphabet to draw first, the second class to draw next, and so on at the first, meeting ; at the next meeting the first class to draw last, and the second class first, and so on from time to time, by just rotation, each class agreeing among themselves who shall draw first.

11. This Constitution may at any time hereafter be amended or altered if found necessary, by the agreement and consent of two third parts of the members of this Society and not otherwise.

12. The Librarian may, if he shall see fit, hire out books to persons not members of this Society, at the rate of six cents per week for each book.

13. We do agree to pay to the Librarian, the sums of money or its value in such books as he will accept, set against our names, which money he shall lay out for books for the use of the Society.

We whose names are subscribed do solemnly engage to conform ourselves to this Constitution. In witness whereof we have hereunto set our names."

Signed, { JESSE TORREY, Jun.  
and by 147 others.

The following form of an instrument for subscription, is as nearly similar as I can recollect, to the one which I prepared and circulated among the citizens of New Lebanon, during the winter evenings in 1803 and 4. The amount generally subscribed by each was fifty cents;—some subscribed a dollar and some 25 cents; others contributed books. The young persons of both sexes, who were possessed of means, also, generally subscribed from 12 cents to a dollar, on signing the articles of the constitution. But many were admitted who contributed nothing.

### *Form of Subscription for Free Libraries.*

The subscribers, impressed with the belief, that the general dissemination of useful knowledge and instruction among the rising generation, would tend to the promotion of virtue and happiness, agree to contribute and pay to ——— the amount, or its value in useful books, set respectively against our names; to



be appropriated to the institution of a free circulating library.

And whenever twelve youth, of either sex, between the age of 12 and 21 years, shall have associated for the purpose of mental improvement, the aforesaid ——— is authorised to deliver the money or books by us subscribed and paid, to such agent or committee as shall be appointed by the society to receive the same for the above mentioned purpose.

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## ESSAYS

### *On the pernicious effects of the habitual intemperate or temperate use of Spirituous Liquors.*

Verily and sincerely is my conviction of the notorious fact, that, independent of all the other infernal marshals that annoy mankind under the banners of Ignorance, the grand head traitress, (making the brain her *head-quarters*) Intemperance, her commanding chief, directing a fiery, deathly army of assassins, consisting of millions of battalions of half gills, gills, half pints and pints of whiskey, gin, rum, brandy, &c. &c. treacherously and murderously betraying their poisoned arrows, (with a smile and a kiss) into the *sanguem cordis* (heart's blood) of their dearest lovers and friends; commits, annually, greater and more irretrievable depredations on the lives, health, wealth, domestic harmony, virtue and morals, and physical power of the aggregate population of the republic of the United States, than a numerous hostile army could inflict by a perpetual warfare!

A few days after having written the above paragraph, looking over a bundle of old pamphlets, I met with an account of the proceedings of that benevolent association of people generally styled Quakers, "for promoting the improvement and civilization of the Indian natives."— Here I found a speech addressed to the committee of Friends, at Baltimore, by the Indian Chief called the Little Turtle, in 1802. I consider it a still more superb and

moving specimen of Indian eloquence than that of Logan — It is a pathetic sermon or epitaph on thousands of his poisoned brethren ! As short as it is, before I could go through it, I was several times compelled to pause, until I could suppress the sympathetic emotions which it excited, and recover my interrupted vision from irresistible suffusions of moisture. Who, that has not a heart of flint and an eye of horn, can view this picture, drawn by an unlettered savage, and then wheel his eye over the frightful portraiture, ( as large, and no less real than life ) which exhibits the present assimilated condition of us civilized white men, with apathy ? Here is the speech :—

*“Brothers and friends*—When our forefathers first met on this island, your red brethren were very numerous. But since the introduction amongst us of what you call spirituous liquors, and what we think may be justly called POISON our numbers are greatly diminished. It has destroyed a great part of your red brethren.

*“My Brothers and Friends*—We plainly perceive, that you see the very evil which destroys your red brethren ; it is not an evil of our own making ; we have not placed it amongst ourselves ; it is an evil placed amongst us by the white people ; we look to them to remove it out of our country. We tell them—brethren fetch us useful things ; bring goods that will clothe us, our women and our children, and not this evil liquor that destroys our reason, that destroys our health, that destroys our lives. But all we can say on this subject is of no service, nor gives relief to your red brethren.

*“My Brothers and Friends*—I rejoice to find that you agree in opinion with us, and express an anxiety to be, if possible, of service to us in removing this great evil out of our country ; an evil which has had so much room in it, and has destroyed so many of our lives, that it causes our young men to say, “ we had better be at war with the white people, this liquor which they

introduce into our country, is more to be feared than the gun and the tomahawk. There are more of us dead since the treaty of Greenville, than we lost by the six years war before. It is all owing to the introduction of this liquor amongst us."

"*Brothers*—When our young men have been out hunting, and are returning home loaded with skins and furs, on their way, if it happens that they come along where some of this whiskey is deposited, the white man who sells it, tells them to take a little drink; some of them will say no, I do not want it; they go on till they come to another house, where they find more of the same kind of drink; it is there offered again; they refuse; and again the third time; but finally the fourth or fifth time one accepts of it and takes a drink, and getting one, he wants another; and then a third and fourth, till his senses have left him. After his reason comes back again to him, when he gets up and finds where he is, he asks for his peltry—the answer is "you have drank them"—where is my gun? "It is gone;" where is my blanket? "It is gone;" where is my shirt? "You have sold it for whiskey!!" Now, *Brothers*, figure to yourselves what condition this man must be in. He has a family at home; a wife and children, who stand in need of the profits of his hunting.—What must be *their* wants, when he himself is even without a shirt!"

One of the most prominent advantages of civilization over the savage state, is considered to be the protection of the rights of the social compact and its members, by equitable laws, from aggressions of individuals. Let us inquire whether the habitual drinker of distilled spirits does not, first by anticipation, and eventually in reality, plunder the public treasury? A rich man, or a poor man, no matter which, (for Intemperance, like its legitimate successor, *Death*, soon levels all distinctions as to fortune, and the former does also, in dignity and respectability) and perhaps honest, *except his fatal mistake, of being willing to sacrifice his health, life, property, reputation, his wife and*

*children*, together with almost every source of social enjoyment to the heathenish God of stills, swallows daily the worth of a given amount in distilled spirits, exceeding the collateral income of his trade, farm or labor, exclusive of what is required for customary family expenses. Hence, if mathematical computation tells the truth, this unfortunate man, together with his family, so far as any or all are incapable of labor, within one, two, four, eight or sixteen years, according to the case, are inevitably pushed into a situation that demands the compassion and charity of the public and of his more prudent neighbors. It is an ancient and established truth, that a stitch in time saves nine, although but little heeded, and that an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. General knowledge is the only infallible remedy for this moral pestilence. To American Sages, therefore,

The *aggrieved* Genius of America appeals:  
To apply the SOVEREIGN BALM, and relieve *those ills*.

A statement has been communicated to me, from an authentic source, that one of our most distinguished statesmen, having been a candidate for a seat in one of our State Legislatures, disdained to dishonor himself and his country, by purchasing the suffrages of his fellow citizens, with distilled spirits; the consequence of which obstinacy was, that an ignorant grog-seller, who could neither read nor write his name, not being over nice about honor, by distributing *whiskey* profusely amongst the electors, obtained the appointment.\* With much pain I have also lately learned the following alarming fact, from credible authority: A philanthropic member of the Legislative Council

\* This method of *quickening* the senses of American citizens to an understanding of their interests, has been successfully practised for many years in several of the states, by candidates for seats in Congress. And yet we pompously and *justly* too, style ourselves the most enlightened, virtuous, free and happy nation on earth.

of one of the capital cities of the United States, clearly recognizing the calamitous consequences, proceeding from the existence of the great number of tippling shops, sanctioned by the public authorities, in vain exerted his efforts for a reduction of the number of these whirlpools of destruction and woe, for two years, when, being discouraged, he withdrew from that employment with chagrin. One of the members was so ingenuous as to acknowledge, that the reason why he could not unite with him in effecting that object was, that he obtained *his living* by selling distilled spirits to the retailers by the barrel, and that the retailers got *their living* by selling it to others in smaller quantities! On hearing this, I exclaimed, "if there be a city in the United States, the public agents of which are governed in their proceedings by such motives, then the Lord have mercy on that city."

The dawn of this day had not commenced, when the preceding thoughts and facts glanced thro' my mind in instantaneous succession.

As the sun began to ascend and diffuse its golden radiance over the American hemisphere; while I alternately beheld this majestic agent of the Creator, and the venerable walls of the last and only solitary castle,\* in which the persecuted Genius of Liberty is permitted to dwell throughout this vast Globe, the following ejaculation sprang spontaneously from my melted heart: "God of the Universe, enlighten my soul with the fire of thy spirit;—permit me to be the humble organ through which a spark thereof may be transmitted to the souls of men in the United States of America, that a bright flame may be thereby kindled in their minds, that shall display clearly to their senses, a view of the fatal and inextricable vortex into which they are gradually and unwarily plunging themselves and their posterity!" I then yielded to an irresistible impulse, which enjoined it on

\* The Capitol of the United States.

me to devote the preceding day to the execution of this essay, which, if it prove the means of protecting a single innocent female, and her babes from the venomous jaws of the most cruel hydra that is permitted to enter our dwellings and receive our *voluntary* embraces and *cordial* hospitalities ; to me, it will afford a superior compensation to that of possessing all the diamonds of all the Monarchs of Europe.

NOTE.—*Having written the above essay, while at the City of Washington in 1815, it was published originally in the National Intelligencer.*

## PHENOMENON

*Of extracting the greatest Good from the worst Evil.*

I shall employ this opportunity to announce to the citizens of the United States my determination to circulate, as extensively as possible, throughout the country, memorials to the Congress, and also to the state Legislatures, praying that sufficient funds may be raised, by a liberal system of duties on ARDENT SPIRITS, for the universal establishment of FREE LANCASTRIAN SCHOOLS, AND FREE PUBLIC LIBRARIES.

Spirituous liquors ought to be answerable for the mischiefs which they produce.

" From a report of an association in Portland, called the Moral Society, it appears that out of 85 persons subject to the public charity in that place, 71 had become so from their intemperance, and that out of 118 supplied at their own houses by the town, more than half are of that description. The expences of the town in its charities exceed 6000 dollars, and more than two thirds of that sum went to support such persons as were made poor by their vices. Of consequence, 7000 persons are taxed 4000 dollars by the vices of their neighbors. From these well known facts the report proceeds to calculate almost a half million

of dollars paid in the same way in this state only, and if in the same proportion in the United States, the whole amount must be millions. We all enquire what can be done. We cannot take away personal liberty. We cannot prohibit spirituous liquors. We cannot punish persons not convicted of any breach of the laws. We cannot distinguish in the business of life, because the rich are sometimes as blame-worthy as their less wealthy neighbors. We can say that when any persons are committed to the public charity, they shall be properly guarded against temptations. That their habits shall be considered, and all restraints which can consist with health, shall be laid. We might hope that some laws of education and life might obtain. But as no love of fame, no great talents, or public trusts, can be said to have been sufficient to prevent men and nations from the guilt and the shame of intemperance we have a right in the administration of charity to regard not only the health and hopes of the sufferers, but the safety and the economy of civil society."

The report of the Moral Society exhibits the ravages of intemperance on *property*. The following lines, which I cut out of one of the Philadelphia newspapers a year ago, depict its barbarous inroads upon *domestic felicity*; in comparison with which money is "*trash*."

## DISSIPATION.

Not the jaws of Charybdis nor the hoarse rocks in Scylla,  
 Not all the fell dangers that lurk in the deep.  
 Not the earthquake's deep yawn, nor the volcano's lava,  
 Not the pestilence's breath, or the hurricane's sweep;

Not all the dread monsters that live thro' creation  
 Have caused such destruction, such mis'ry and woe,  
 As from that arch pest of mankind, Dissipation,  
 Through the civilized world incessantly flow.

'Tis a vortex insatiate on whose giddy bosom  
 The victim is whirl'd till his senses are gone,  
 Till, lost to all shame and the dictates of reason,  
 He lends not one effort to ever return.

Ah! view on its surface the ruins of genius,  
 The wreck of a scholar, the christian and friend!  
 The learning, the wit, the graces that charm'd us,  
 In the mind-drowning bowl meet a premature end.

Ah! hear, drown'd in tears, the disconsolate mother,  
 Lament the lost state of a favorite son,  
 Hear the wife and the child, the sister and brother  
 Mourn a husband, a father, a brother undone.

One of the principal funnels to the insatiable vortex of intemperance is the generally prevailing popular error, that the *temperate* use of ardent spirits is innocent and even healthful and necessary. I was chilled with surprise and almost with despair, to hear several of the chosen guardians of our national welfare, standing in their places in the House of Representatives, proclaim their sentiments that "*distilled spirits had become one of the necessities of life, that the farmer could not do without it in his agricultural labors, and that to impose heavy taxes on it would be oppressive to industry.*"\* But I was much gratified however, to see that a majority, (though a very small one) were of a different opinion. It was strongly urged by one gentleman that whiskey is an important article of manufacture; that it adds

\* "Let it not be said ardent spirits have become necessary from habit in harvest, and in other seasons of uncommon and hard labor. The habit is a bad one, and may be easily broken. Let but half a dozen farmers combine in a neighborhood to allow higher wages to their laborers, &c."—DR. RUSH. The farmers in one of the counties of Pennsylvania have lately adopted public resolutions to suppress the use of distilled spirits amongst their laborers, at all seasons.



to the wealth of this nation, and ought to be encouraged by our government. The eye that cannot perceive that the reverse is the fact must be both morally and politically blind. For a community to permit or encourage the importation or manufacture of distilled spirits, for the sake of the revenue derived therefrom, is precisely the same policy as it would be to institute premiums for the construction of daggers to stab its own vitals with.

Extract from Darwin's *Zoonomia* Sec. 30. "When the expediency of laying a further tax on the distillation of spirituous liquors from grain was canvassed before the House of Commons some years ago, it was said of the distillers, with *great truth*, "*they take the BREAD from the people and convert it into POISON!*" Yet is this big manufactory of disease permitted to continue, as appears by its paying into the treasury above £900,000,† near a million of money annually. And thus, under the names of Rum, Brandy, Gin, Whiskey, usquebaugh, wine, cyder, beer, and porter, alcohol is become the bane of the Christian world, as opium of the Mahometan.

Evœe ! parçe, Liber,  
Parçe, gravi metuende thyrsò ! — HOR."

O ! from grievous sting of Bacchus' fatal dart,  
Be preserv'd : — defend yourself with all your art !

But it is almost as useless to expostulate with veterans in the ranks of Bacchus, as with those who are confident that they are under the power of witchcraft. This fact is well illustrated by the reply of a boozy tipler, to a Quaker of Baltimore, who informed me that he was representing to him the terrible consequences of intemperance, "I have no doubt, said he, but that

† About 4,000,000 dollars.

all you say is true, but you might as well *sing psalms to a dead horse* as to talk to me." Yet let us not forget that these unfortunate victims of their own weakness and imprudence are still *men*; and claim our sympathy and commiseration for their want of discretion. And if warnings and entreaties will not prevail, let us resort to more efficacious means for *their relief*, as well as for the protection of the common interest against the effects of their conduct. Reproachful denunciations, however, are not only useless, but injurious and uncharitable. "We all enquire what can be done? We cannot take away personal liberty." &c. What is liberty? Does it permit one individual to deprive another, directly or indirectly of the fruits of his toil and prudence? What is the difference, except in a criminal point of view, whether my neighbor picks my pocket or places his weeping starving wife and children in such a situation, that I must either empty my pocket myself to relieve them, or see them perish? It is lamentable, as well as astonishing that so few of our citizens have granted this subject its lawful weight either in the scales of policy, morality, physics or religion. Is there an individual who is not now affected, more or less, in some shape or other, from the immense deficit in the national wealth, occasioned by the appropriation of 20,000,000 dollars annually during the last twenty years, to a threefold worse purpose than annihilation? Twice we have bravely resisted and spurned *political despotism*, and at length we have prostrated our necks under the sceptre of king ALCOHOL.—With an incredible infatuation we have sacrificed the golden presents of Ceres on the hissing *copper* altars of crazy Bacchus. Were I allowed the privilege of obliterating the two greatest scourges of mankind, I would select the art of distilling food, and the art of war. I am not disposed to attach any degree of moral turpitude, to manufacturers or sellers of ardent spirits; but it does not seem to me that if they would revolve and scrutinize the subject in its real

genuine character, they would not hesitate to renounce an employment which involves in its development, the propagation of so much human misery and wretchedness.\* But the *nation* must take this matter in hand, or nothing essential can be done.

The safety of the nation is at stake ! Let the question be fairly stated : —it is, whether Reason or Alcohol shall predominate ? Or,

*Reason, Virtue, the Lives,  
Health, Wealth,  
Morals and Happiness  
of our citizens ! !*

versus

*Alcohol, Intemperance,  
Vice, Poverty and  
Misery, Crimes and Infamy,  
Disease and Death ! !*

Let the tribunal consist of the inhabitants of the United States, male and female, old and young, of whatever condition, as *jurors* : and their legislators as judges.— Let every one that can speak say yea or nay, and record it with his or her name or mark. We know women and children are not allowed a voice in making laws, but in this case particularly, their fate is seriously concerned, and their voices ought to be listened to, and duly regarded. Let the public will be called forth by meetings and memorials. Let it be ascertained whether the majority prefer self-preservation or self-destruction. Dr. Rush says, "let good

\* A merchant of Virginia by the name of Scholfield, listened to his conscience, and burnt all his distilled liquors publicly on the summit of a mountain. Another in Delaware, beat in the heads of his casks. A respectable French gentleman having purchased an estate at Buffaloe (N. Y.) on which was a distilling establishment, demolished it immediately on taking possession, saying he " *had done one good deed.*"

men of every class unite and besiege the general and state governments with petitions to limit the number of taverns ; to impose heavy duties upon ardent spirits, &c."

Another writer who has given a lively picture of the devastations of distilled liquors, says, " let men who wish well to their country, unite in petitions to government, to impose still heavier duties upon imported spirits, and our own distillers ; and to regulate taverns and retailers of spirits ; and to secure the property of habitual drunkards, for the benefit of their families."

There has been " much speaking," much writing, much printing, and much preaching, on this subject, and but *little* benefit seems to result from the whole. It is time to try a little *doing*. This will accomplish much more than talking. " Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and *doeth* them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock." — [JESUS.] Let our " good men," of whom the number is undoubtedly great, adopt the beautiful maxim of the late Cotton Mather, author of "*Essays to do good*," " that a power and an opportunity to do good, not only gives a right to the doing of it, but makes the doing of it a duty." The inducement for *doing good*, ought to be further strengthened by the circumstance that it carries with it its own reward ; or as I once heard a public speaker of the Friends' Society elegantly express the sentiment, "*that while you are plucking thorns from your neighbor's breast, you are strewing your own path with flowers.*" It is in the power of men of affluence to be the most active in effecting a reformation of the public morals, and in point of interest they are also most concerned.

I have prepared the following forms of memorials, which it is my intention to offer for signature as widely as it may be in my power ; and I do most ardently hope they may be transcribed and presented in every house occupied by human inhabitants, in the United States.—Preachers, School-masters, Post masters,

and others to whom it may be convenient and agreeable, are respectfully invited to co-operate in this exceedingly necessary work. Let us not shrink from the task, on account of its magnitude, and the fear of its impracticability. And if we even fail to accomplish all that we *would*, there is still a self satisfaction, and must be *some utility*, in doing all that we *can*.

Memorial of Sundry inhabitants of the United States of America, to the President, Senate, and House of Representatives ; — praying that laws may be enacted for the suppression of the unnecessary use of spirituous liquors, and for the general diffusion of knowledge.

Whereas we the subscribers view with deep concern, the alarming and increasing extent of the moral, political and physical calamities produced by the vast consumption of spirituous liquors in our country. The reality of the evil is so conspicuous and palpable, that it would be a waste of ink and paper to delineate its specific features. The abstract principles of liberty, and the relative rights of man, authorise and demand legislative interposition. The citizen who wantonly destroys his property ; his health ; his mental faculties ; by drinking spirituous liquors ; and thereby thrusts himself or a helpless family upon the public bounty, commits a trespass on the rights of the community. We consider it the duty of government to adopt measures for preventing such aggressions no less than for the security and recovery of ordinary debts.

And whereas we are fully convinced that the early instruction of the rising generation in the moral duties of life, would contribute materially to avert the evils under consideration. We therefore implore and request the government of these United States, to provide for the education of every youth, whose education is not otherwise provided for, within the jurisdiction thereof. — For this purpose, as well as to discourage intemperance, we earnestly recommend that a duty of fifty cents per

gallon be imposed upon all spirituous liquors manufactured within the United States ; — and one dollar per gallon upon all wines and spirituous liquors which shall be imported : — the monies accruing from the duties on domestic liquors, to be appropriated to the establishment of free Lancastrian and common schools, and free circulating libraries, in the respective districts in which the taxes shall be levied and collected : — and the duties on imported liquors to be applied to the same purpose, in such manner and place as the wisdom of Congress shall suggest.

Memorial of the inhabitants of the State of ——— to the Governor, and Legislature thereof, praying that effectual laws may be enacted for the suppression of the unnecessary use of spirituous liquors, &c.

Whereas the subscribers behold with fearful concern, the alarming ravages of spirituous liquors on the health, lives, property, morals and domestic happiness of the people of this State. Self-defence, and the equal rights of man authorise legislative interposition.

The citizen who destroys the products of his labor, his health, his mental faculties, by drinking spirituous liquors, and thereby thrusts himself or a helpless family upon the public bounty, commits a trespass on the rights of the community. We consider it the duty of government to adopt measures for preventing such aggressions, no less than for the security and recovery of ordinary debts. We therefore implore and request the legislature of this state to enact laws for placing the property of habitual drunkards, in the care of trustees, for the benefit of their families ; to be restored again whenever such mentally diseased persons shall have recovered their reason, and discretion : — To restrict the licences for selling distilled spirits by drams, solely to such Inns as shall be considered requisite for the entertainment of travellers : — To impose a tax of one cent upon every half gill of distilled

spirits vended by Innkeepers ; and 12 1-2 cents per quart upon all distilled spirits, by whomsoever sold, in quantities exceeding one gill, and less than ten gallons: And to appropriate the monies thence accruing, to the establishment of free Lancastrian and common schools, free circulating libraries ; Alms houses, Asylums and Infirmaries for the benefit of indigent victims of intemperance ; houses of employment ; and to such other purposes as may be found expedient.

It is the more indispensable to obtain the sentiments of the people at large, on this momentous national question, in the manner here proposed, on account of a prejudice indulged by many, (legislators in particular, with whom I have frequently discussed the subject,) that legislative restrictions upon the distribution and use of spirituous liquors, would excite disaffection and rebellion. Such is my confidence in a contrary result, even with respect to the captives of Intemperance themselves ; and such my impressions of the imperious necessity and duty of combatting the progress of that unmerciful tyrant and murderer ; that I feel willing to devote a large proportion of the subsequent time that my life may be preserved, to the purpose of ascertaining the fact. I am not a fanatic ; but I confess my solicitude and zeal on this subject, approach nearly to enthusiasm. The case surely demands the concurrent enthusiasm and perseverance of all who possess the least sympathy for the sufferings and woes of their fellow-men. And the very sufferers are not so indifferent as has been generally supposed. Many have addressed their supreme Parent, with supplications to rescue and protect them from the fascinating *charm*, and twining gripe with which that cunning *serpent* Alcohol inveigles its prey. And they are not wholly averse to coercive means of relief. Several have sought their emancipation, in oaths of abstinence for a given term. Some have offered premiums for a remedy to the habit of drinking ; — and one

individual of this description, declared to the writer of these essays, that he "*wished government would impose a tax upon whiskey of five dollars a gallon, and then he should stop drinking it.*"

On the whole, the probability is, that a more formidable resistance to the taxation of spirituous liquors, will spring from the manufacturers, importers and sellers of them, than from the consumers. This conclusion is authorised by the fact, that so many fortunes have been acquired by those occupations; by the acknowledgement of the Aldermen, as narrated in the preceding essays, (page 26) and decisively by the late remonstrance published by the grocers of the city of New York. So that the business at length resolves itself into this great moral and political problem;—WHETHER THE MAJORITY OF OUR CITIZENS, FROM WHOM ALL POLITICAL AUTHORITY ORIGINATES, SHALL FIND IT TO BE JUSTICE AND CORRECT POLICY, TO GRANT ONE SECTION OF THE COMMUNITY, THE PRIVILEGE OF "GETTING THEIR LIVING," OR ACCUMULATING ESTATES, THROUGH THE BANKRUPTCY AND MORAL AND PHYSICAL DESTRUCTION OF ANOTHER MORE NUMEROUS, BUT IMPRUDENT SECTION?

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### THE HABITUAL TEMPERATE USE OF SPIRITUOUS LIQUORS, A VIOLATION OF MORAL PURITY, AND RELIGIOUS DUTY.

So far as it is in our power to understand the designs and laws of our Creator, for the regulation of our conduct, it is both our duty and interest to yield perfect compliance. The preservation of health and life, is unquestionably one of our most palpable and explicit duties. Every act therefore which impairs our health and diminishes the period of our lives, is a violation



of the express command of God. I shall endeavor to demonstrate by physiological facts, that both these effects are produced more or less, by the application of distilled spirits to the stomach, in whatever quantity. All our food, whether vegetable or animal, is originally derived from the vegetable kingdom. The materials from which vegetables receive their nutriment generally exist in an oxidized state. Thus water contains nearly seven eighths of its weight of oxygen; carbonic acid nearly three fourths, and all decaying vegetable and animal matter is found highly saturated with it. The great process of vegetation appears to consist in decomposing the various substances which supply the rudiments of its food, and in expelling the excess of oxygen, with which they are always combined. The first product of vegetation is sugar, which contains 8 parts hydrogen, 28 carbon, and 64 of oxygen, and being the crudest and most abundant article of food that exists, is probably designed for the support of the graminivorous races of animals; as the various grasses, including the sugar cane, yield more of it than any other plants. Whether a digression or not, I must here announce the important fact that sugar is an improper and deleterious article of diet for man, and a prolific source of disease, which, if my life is spared, I shall at a future time, attempt to demonstrate both from facts and the physical laws of nature. The second stage towards the perfectibility of the nutritive principle, is that of gum or mucilage, which contains only half its quantity of oxygen; 14 parts in a hundred less than sugar. Fecula or starch is a fraction finer, and is the product of those seeds which constitute the principal and probably the most appropriate food for men. Sugar is found in the most common juice or sap of plants and trees, while gum is confined chiefly to the bark, root, or heart, and fecula and oil, to the seeds and nuts. Oil is still farther refined, containing 77.243 carbon, 13.36 hydrogen, and only 9.427 of oxygen. Gluten the most nutritive substance with which we are acquainted, is

composed according to Accum, entirely of hydrogen, carbon and nitrogen. It is afforded in greater quantity from wheat, than any other vegetable.

Now in order to obtain alcohol, (*or whiskey,*) from any of the seeds used for bread, it is necessary that they should be subjected to the recontamination of oxygen, so as to reduce them back to their crude saccharine state. Then the vinous fermentation, imparting still more oxygen, must be applied and continued until those once nutritive milky materials have become sensibly acid or *sour*. From this loathsome *leaven* (or yeast) of depravity, disease and death, the serpentine alembic, with the aid of the furnace, disgorges a *liquid fire*, which consumes the health, happiness and lives of thousands and millions of unthinking infatuated men. The literal chemical term for this fluid would be *the oxide of nutriment*: and it is in this state that most poisons exist; being indebted for their activity to oxygen; as the oxides of arsenic copper, antimony, lead, silver, quicksilver, &c. The composition of alcohol is as follows:—Oxygen 37.85, Carbon 43.65, Hydrogen 24.94, Azote 3.52, Ashes 0.04, = 100.00. Composed of very inflammable materials, in a disengaged state, and mingled with more than one third of its weight of oxygen, the common vehicle of fire, it commences a kind of smothered combustion instantaneously on its reception unto the stomach; corrodes the organs of digestion, excites an unnatural heat and violent circulation of the blood; attended with delirium, and succeeded by a loss of strength, proportioned to the excess of excitement produced by the irritating agent. Several other poisons produce similar effects. It is an infallible axiom in the physical organization of man, that every excitement of his vital powers beyond the point to which his Creator has adapted him, which is the uniform effect of alcohol, diminishes his capacity for repeating like motions from like means. Hence it may be safely inferred *that every dram of spirituous liquors of any description,*

*is a check upon the capital stock of strength and life, and hastens the approach of the hour of dissolution, in proportion to the indulgence.* Each dram increases the appetite for another, and the necessity of an increased quantity, to produce an equal effect, multiplies in a progressive ratio. Thus it follows, unavoidably, that the habitual *temperate* use of ardent spirits is a pernicious and vicious practice. Besides its consumption of vital power, it will be found an unjustifiable and immoral habit in another point of view. It is a wanton and unnecessary waste of property, which ought to be religiously preserved, even by those who possess it, in ever so great profusion. Dr. Franklin says whoever draws a fish from the sea, draws up a piece of silver. Whoever swallows two gills of distilled spirits daily, *annihilates 20 ounces* of silver a year, or 20 bushels of rye; for the want of which many of his own posterity may eventually starve to death. In this way, it has been estimated by a late writer that the people of the United States, destroy 33,365,529 dollars annually. Considering this, and the many other useless and superfluous modes of diminishing the common stock of national wealth, there is no reason to be surprised to hear the present universal re-echo of "*hard times,*" "*dull times,*" "*scarcity of money,*" "*scarcity and high price of bread corn,*" "*sales by execution,*" "*difficulty of collecting debts,*" "*insolvencies,*" "*pauperism,*" &c. &c. &c.

## APPENDIX. AMERICAN POLITICS.

The reason why the citizens of the U. States are separated into two great contending political parties, calumniating and provoking each other with volleys of corrosive epithets and abuse, is to me inexplicable. Ask every citizen indiscriminately his political creed, and 99 hundredths will give synonymous answers. Both parties cling to the same standard, the federal constitution, and yet reproach each other with the terms *federal*, *democrat*, &c. without reflecting on the meaning of either. The word *federal* signifies nothing more than united, and has no concern with modes or systems of government whatever. The word *democracy* signifies *government by the people*, and composes one of the most essential and admirable qualities of our political system. Any other mode of government must originate from usurpation, violence, and oppression. It is very plain that no man is born marked by the Creator above another, "for none comes into the world with a saddle on his back, nor any booted and spurred to ride him." With rare exceptions it is the unanimous political theorem of the citizens of the United States, of both parties, that the people are the only source of legitimate power, and that legislators are only public agents, or servants, dependent on the confidence of their employers for the continuation of their term of service. All claim and assume the title of *republican*, the literal meaning of which is *public affairs, general interest, common good*, &c. Whence then all this senseless clamor about Toryism and Democracy, Federalism and Republicanism, British Influence and French Influence, &c. &c.? Can it spring entirely from pure *patriotism* on either side? Does not a great proportion of it proceed from *self-interested* aspirants for office, and publishers of news-papers? Let every one examine and decide

for himself. In selecting candidates for public trust, beware of the imperious haughty *Aristocrat* or tyrant, whatever party or title he may assume. Without distinction of party names, let the indispensable qualifications, be integrity, capacity, wisdom, moral rectitude and patriotism.

But the most lamentable and mischievous prevailing political errors, after all, and which are confined to no specific party, are the customs of sending to the other side of the globe annually, several millions of *silver dollars*, to be exchanged for *tree leaves*, which produce an injury seven fold greater than the cost of them, in promoting the general epidemic of indigestion and nervous complaints; of sending to Europe several millions more for contemptible trifles for the gratification of a vain and ridiculous fancy: several millions more to the West Indies for rum, sugar, molasses, coffee, and tobacco, which co-operate in their effects as joint allies with the said shrubbery, first mentioned; of sacrificing 20,000,000 more for whiskey the worst commodity of all, in our own country; and lastly of paying many millions more to the numerous *distributors* of those various seeds of moral and physical contamination three fourths of whom might otherwise, be employed in augmenting the national wealth, in a variety of *useful occupations*.

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Soon after having finished the foregoing work, the author was presented, by a friend, with the following mournful dirge; with a request to insert it, if thought appropos to the present subject.

### THE LOVERS OF RUM.

I've mus'd on the mis'ries of life,  
 To find from what quarter they come,  
 Whence most of confusion and strife,  
 Alas! from the Lovers of Rum.

I met with a fair one distress'd ;  
 I ask'd from whence her sorrows could come,  
 She replied. " I am sorely oppress'd,  
 " My husband's a Lover of Rum."

I found a poor child in the street,  
 Whose limbs by the cold, were all numb,  
 No stockings or shoes on his feet,  
 His father's a Lover of Rum.

I went to collect a small debt,  
 The master was absent from home ;  
 The sequel I need not relate,  
 The man was a Lover of Rum.

I met with a pauper in Rags,  
 Who ask'd for a trifling sum :  
 I'll tell you the cause why he begs,  
 He once was a Lover of Rum.

I've seen men, from health, wealth and ease,  
 Untimely, descend to the tomb,  
 I need not describe their disease,  
 Because they were Lovers of Rum.

Ask prisons, and gallowses all,  
 Whence most of their customers come :  
 From whence they have most of their calls,  
 They'll tell you, " from Lovers of Rum."













